12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

101
648 which, ironically, is what the townsman calls the backwoodsman. The Brazilian residents in the upper Tapajós are scattered along its banks and the lower sections of its larger tributaries as far south as 9° S lat. on the Juruena and São Manoel rivers. Beyond this point the country is inhabited by the Nambikuára, Tapayuna, and Tupí-Cawahíb Indians, who are all hostile to the whites and effectively prevent further penetration. The Gê-speaking Northern Kayapó Indians, who live to the east of the Mundurucú, have raided the upper Tapajós in recent years, and at the time of our visit fear had induced all inhabitants of the east bank of the river between the Tropas and Jamaxím rivers to move to safer areas.

• 511
249 The local Brazilians have an enormous fear of hostile Indians. This is especially true of recent immigrants to the Amazon, and it is reinforced by a general feeling of insecurity in the jungle environment. The natives of the States of Ceará and Piauí who have been attracted to the area through aspirations of wealth in rubber, are frequently heard to remark that "life here is a sacrifice"; or "it is better to starve in town where there is movement and people than in this desolation." Inhabitants born in the area are, of course, accustomed to it, but they recognize their own poverty and the despair of their condition. Life in the jungle is difficult; the people are poor and often hungry and deprived of the barest necessities of life. Rubber, the basic export of the area, once offered rich returns to collectors, and especially to traders, but the latex of
[430] the wild *Hevea* is now submarginal on the world market; the population engaged in its extraction has correspondingly experienced a forty-year period of depression.

648 The governments of Brazil and of the State of Pará are remote from the region. On rare occasions, one or two policemen from the town of Itaituba, the seat of the mu-

12:Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
SQ13 Mundurucu SQ13

makes a dispersed settlement pattern necessary. Transportation in the region is only by canoe, and this, combined with the long work day, necessitates the placement of the house near the rubber avenue. The result is an average distance between houses of one mile, longer intervening stretches occurring in districts poor in rubber and thus submarginal in today's market.

The rubber tapper's work is not finished when he returns to his house, for he still must smoke and thereby cure and congeal the liquid latex. This process usually occupies about three hours, but if his yield is great, it can take up to five hours. Since his poverty is such that he can afford to buy only certain staple foodstuffs, he is often forced to fish until late in the night after he has smoked his rubber. The small amount of game eaten is usually killed by him during his rounds of the rubber trees. The only other important subsistence activity, slash-and-burn agriculture, is not often practiced by the rubber cutter because good land within a feasible distance of his house is rare, because the patron, to whom he usually is indebted requires extra services in addition to a maximum production of rubber, and because he is resigned in apathy to his hopeless situation. Under these circumstances of great distance from his neighbors and preoccupation with a barter economy requiring complete individualization of production, the bonds of economic cooperation and interdependency are weak within the local community. The caboclo has no recourse because he is usually held in debt servitude to the trader, and because the region, in its present state of economic development, offers few alternatives. This, then, is the milieu into which the remaining Munduruců are being progressively drawn and into which many of their forebears have already been assimilated.